

621 regardless of lineage, depending upon the context. Affinal ties are con-
 61 sidered just as legitimate, and used just as frequently in balancing
 602 power and in determining allegiance as cognatic ties. In this way
 82 security is guaranteed to any individual because of the number of
 571 recognized social groups to which he can claim membership. This
 ambivalence is again an important structural principle, and is cer-
 tainly manifest in the social groupings observable in the building of
 successive hunting camps.

621 If age rather than kinship fixes one's place within the band, then,
 56 we have to consider how a band maintains any sense of continuity
 from one generation to the next. There is the alliance of age groups
 and the educational role of age groups which provide some degree of
 continuity, but this would not be sufficient in view of what we have
 said about the shifting composition of the band. It is undoubtedly
 territory that gives the band its identity as such and enables that
 identity to persist, and it is to his territory, as to his age group, rather
 than to any kin group, that an Mbuti owes allegiance.

602 Kinship is recognized in assessing problems of inheritance, but
 82 with so little to inherit the problems are minimal. In general a man's
 belongings are divided among his sons or, if his sons are too young,
 they are held in trust for them by his brothers. Similarly with a wom-
 82 an's belongings. Kinship may also be used to maintain an economic
 balance, just as it may be used to maintain a political balance, by
 advancing claims to the spoils of a hunt on the ground of kinship, or
 611 indeed by advancing claims for the adoption of children. But again,
 as such claims are advanced on grounds of both cognatic and affinal
 ties, the principles of unilineal descent are directly contradicted.

621 In fact the nuclear family is best regarded as one of a number of
 594 cells that make up the totality of the band, each cell reflecting the
 same basic structure as the band itself. Within the family the factors
 of territory and age also play a part, the locality of the hut symboliz-
 ing the unity of the family and its separateness from others, the age
 differential dividing the family in activity, authority and allegiance.

• 59 Even fission and fusion are a part of family life, as children are apt
 to leave their natal family any time after they reach the age of three or
 four, and either be adopted by or simply live for a while with another
 family in the same band; or they may be adopted by a family in an-
 other band and go to live there, even if their parents continue living
 together in their home band. Such separations within the band do not
 affect their relationship with other members of their family of the

THE BAND

117

same age group, and on maturity and marriage the old nuclear family sometimes reaffirms itself as an extended family. The old parents may build a separate hut adjoining the huts of their married children, or even live in the hut of one of their offspring, who will probably build an extension for the purpose. But during adolescence children may well be separated from their biological parents by both time and space. Similarly in adulthood there is not infrequently friction between brothers, sometimes leading to fission within the band. 59 •

Finally, in connection with the importance of age as a structural principle, it should be pointed out that the lack of a unilineal system of descent among the Mbuti is associated with a lack of any developed form of ancestor worship. Practices associated with death will be dealt with more fully later; here it need only be said that far from remembering the dead by word or action, the main objective seems to be to forget them. They may never be referred to again, particularly by name, and there is no memorial maintained in their honor, no marked or tended grave site. However, they are by the same token not feared, and insofar as they are remembered at all they are remembered with affection. The concern of the Mbuti is almost exclusively with the present. This is not to say that they deny a past or a future, either in this life or the next; it is merely to say that they believe that by a correct fulfillment of the present, the past and the future will take care of themselves. This correlates with the age-group system and with the dominance and prestige of the two middle groups, the youths and the hunters, for in their hands lies the fulfillment of the present. 611
769
181
(829)
(561)